

# 8-13-80 #4 Ruldoph Novotny

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

newark, chamber, city, business, people, project, penn station, population, home, area, middle income housing, community, great, mix, gordon, completed, direct, spend, housing, built

## SPEAKERS

Gordon Bishop, Ruldoph Novotky


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**G** Gordon Bishop 00:00  
[bakkground] This is sound roll 4.

**R** Ruldoph Novotky 00:11  
[background]

**G** Gordon Bishop 00:22  
Well Mr. Novotny as the chairman of the Greater Newark Chamber of Commerce. What does your organization do for the City of Newark?

**R** Ruldoph Novotky 00:36  
Well, that's a question Gordon, that could probably take an hour to fill, but I'll wrap it up real closely. Our Chamber of Commerce is a very alive one, a very active one. It's formed by all the business community. And the interest basically is in the city in which you operate Newark, you have to realize that the fortunes of our businesses depend upon the health and vitality of the City of Newark. We as individuals, we spend more of our waking hours in New York than we do at our other home, if you will. We are concerned people, and the fortunes of the City of Newark are not at all wrapped up in the profitability of the company. There is much more to it than that. We are concerned with the economic health, with the social health, and with the overall vitality of the city. We involve ourselves in anything from housing, to parks, to the creation of business ventures, of course, and the recreational facilities for our people who come here to work, earn their living and make this their home. And that's pretty much in very general what I have to wrap it up quickly. That's about the way to do it.



G

Gordon Bishop 01:50

What specific project projects, is the Chamber doing for the 1980s for Newark, can you tick off a few?

R

Ruldoph Novotky 01:58

Okay, sure. I did mention in the beginning that housing was a concern of ours. And we are especially interested in the creation of housing for middle income families at this point. And the chamber has taken the risk and the venture of a project known as the James Street Commons. We started off modestly, we transformed four well built stone buildings into condominium units, we got tax advantages for the purchasers. We completed them they were sold immediately. And as soon as they were sold, we went into the next eight. And as those eight progress, we'll go into more now the total James Street Project consists of well over 800 Total Units. And these are all sound buildings that don't have to be ripped down and new things built. These are stone structures, which you gut the inside put in new plumbing, electric, new floors in many cases, and they create beautiful homes right here in downtown Newark, where people can work, walk to work.

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Gordon Bishop 03:02

How long will it take for the hamber to complete those 800 units in downtown in the heart of Newark?

R

Ruldoph Novotky 03:11

Well, this is a joint venture now the Chamber will develop as many units as it is capable of, and the city at the same time is going on a parallel direction with others. Now, I would contemplate that probably in a five, six year time span, between the two of us the private public sector, the entire 800 or so will be completed.

G

Gordon Bishop 03:32

The 1980 preliminary figures on the Census show that Newark's population from 1970 to 1980. Went down considerably from 380,000 down to something over 300,000. Do you see with this, this housing renewal that's going on urban renewal, that that the population will will begin to return to the city in the 80s instead of going down like it did in the 70s and 60s.

R

Ruldoph Novotky 04:00

We are positively going to reverse that flow.

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Gordon Bishop 04:03

Well say that give me this statement completely.

R

Ruldoph Novotky 04:05

We are positively going to reverse the outflow into an inflow. See one of the things that has happened within the last four years the the energy crisis has created a new situation entirely. The suburban suburbanites if you will, were ready for the cities, and unfortunately, the cities were not ready for the suburbanites. Therefore, people had to drift out, the c-, the city did deteriorate. If you're going to look at past history. ues, when you look around the city of Newark, you see many buildings torn down, you see more parking areas than anything else. However, that is now that's stopped. Now we're on a reverse. Now we know that people want they have a desire to live in the cities. When you take a look at the university complex over here. And you realize that a professor who may spend 12 hours a day between day and evening classes there, almost of necessity because we do not have adequate middle income housing, almost of necessity has to get into his car and drive another 45 minutes to his other home. And that's not right, we are creating now, the James Street Commons as part of the Prudential project, which is right along the same lines, it's another part of it. And as we produce the the adequate middle income housing, the things that will follow will be the social part of it, the restaurants that will, again, build up. And of course, the artistic things that we have here in Newark, but just have not been found (followed?) as as hard and as aggressively as they should have been. So success breeds success. And I would look toward a total reversal of the population outflow from the city. As a as a business executive, as a president of a bank, do you see Newark as a cultural hub or center of New Jersey? I see us, yes, we have had more than our share of that. But -

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Gordon Bishop 05:59

If you believe in that statement, then repeat the statement if you believe in it, but don't don't repeat if you don't believe in it.

R

Ruldoph Novotky 06:03

I believe that Newark is a an artistic hub. We have the facilities, and we just have not used them tothe full potential, the magnificent Symphony Hall with some of the best acoustics in the country, with some of the best seating, we have not had an adequate program down there, I think we'll get back to that as we have the population to support it. The business community incidentally, has supported the arts tremendously in the state from the opera to the symphony to ballet to the Boys Chorus, our Newark Boys Chorus one of the most popular choruses in the

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Gordon Bishop 06:39

What kind of population mix do you see for Newark in the 80s? As you know, it's now roughly 75 to 85% non white? Do you see this trend increasing? Leveling off? Or do you see a a more balanced mix of all kinds of nationalities?

R

Ruldonh Novotkv 06:58

Ruldoph Novotky 08:38

Gordon, I don't even like to approach it, in that vein, the thing that disturbs me is not whether it's 75%, non white, or 80%, non white, the thing that disturbs me is that the last figure I heard was close to 80%, of the population of Newark is on some form of public assistance. So I relate it to the poor, the middle class and the upper middle class. We right now have a very low mix of middle class, that's where I look for the improvement. And that can be just as well built up with a continuation of 85% non white as easily as not. The whole thing is the economic structure rather than the racial mix.

G

Gordon Bishop 07:39

The reason I mention that, because there are some elements in Newark that would like to see the city become the first Black nationalist capital of America. There are certain extremist groups, which we don't have to get into here, that's not the purpose of our discussion. But a community that opens its doors to all would be a community that ultimately achieves that kind of good sound mix. And that's the reason for that observation, that earlier observation. But I want to get on, on on with the role of the Chamber of Commerce. Who in the chamber? Do you feel is carrying the ball in Newark? s are all businesses doing their thing? Or is it just a handful? The same Chamber club, they call it, you know, there's a certain club in Newark, and it's the same people contributing to the same causes year after year, can that be expanded within the Chamber?

R

Ruldoph Novotky 08:38

Well, that's a good question. Because we're very recently had an experience with that, I think I can answer that question and go into something else, simultaneously. The direct answer to the question, certainly, when you have a business community mix, small business, medium size, and very, very large, influential companies who can afford to pay the tab, you're going to have those who pay the greatest dollars, wanting to have a definite direct input into the decisions on how those dollars are spent. So while it's not quite the club atmosphere, it is yes, you find more and more of the same people doing the big things in Newark. We do have however, within the chamber, we have a set rule that no member may serve on the board for more than two, three year consecutive terms, without removing himself for at least one term. So it's not a case where once you're on the board of directors of the Chamber, you're on there for life and you're carved in granite, that is not the situation at all, no one may serve more than six years in a row. So matter of fact, I'm serving my 6th year now and I will have to retire from the board for at least a three year period. But very recently, we had a great concern. I should say it's a great opportunity, with the development of what is known as the Northeast Corridor project now that is the entire rail system in the northeast, that goes from Boston, all the way south, south of Washington. And suddenly the Federal Rail Administration and Amtrak and the other people involved have realized that they are more than people movers, that really where they move people to become very vital and very, very great places if they're done properly. So the Northeast Corridor project is a tremendously expensive project of the federal government. And they are improving the rail beds, they are improving the trains, they are going to cut down the service time from Boston to Washington dramatically, and of course, from Newark to Washington. But more importantly, they are making the depots, the stations, an attractive place for a person to terminate. And as a result of that, the city of Newark, just very recently, when President Carter signed the Northeast Corridor bill was guaranteed an expenditure of \$21,600,000 for the rehabilitation of Penn Station. Now when something like that, that is

dramatic. And the business community seized on that and said if we're going to have a hub like that, right across the street from Gateway One and Two, this will create great opportunities for us. Now, how do we pursue them and how do we go about them? Because a Rudy Novotny, a great person like a Bob Beck just cannot take full time to work on that sort of thing. So we decided among the top group, if you will, among those high 12 highest paying dues members to the chamber to set up another corporation with a full time staff to plan direct, and move motivate the area of the Central Business District which we define rather parochially maybe from Penn Station west to Broad Street and from Broad Street North up to the Erie Lackawanna station. Now, that has been in process

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Gordon Bishop 12:17

What is the organization called is there a name a name of it?

R

Ruldoph Novotky 12:19

Believe it or not, it is still being organized. The corporation papers are not drawn yet. Renaissance New York is the title we have agreed on, at least for now. But the corporate structure is to be completed within the next week. The companies have dedicated themselves to the budget, which is a very substantial budget for it, we've committed ourselves to a three year program. And we're going to follow this thing all the way through. Now this is unique in Newark, because really, we have left the planning process, if you will. And we've left the development process up to the municipal authorities, the mayor, his staff is mayor's policy division. And the business community now says we've got to be a little more parochial in our views. And we're going to take care of this business center. The things that are happening is as a direct result of the Northeast Carter and the stationary redevelopment are tremendously exciting. It has been spoken in public before so I can say it now. The possibility of a gateway three in the very near future is not at all remote. It is very, very positive. The riverfront project, which is the area along the river, all the way from Penn Station up to if you know Don's 21 restaurant, which is quite an expanse is something in which the chamber has a direct and serious interest. We hope to rehabilitate that entire area. It would be a combination of retail of Office of living, recreation, and Green Acres. And it is a thrilling thing when you see some of the renderings we have on that and realize that anyone now coming from New York coming into Newark, where almost every train stops. To have this view of Newark as an introduction will be a very exciting thing.

G

Gordon Bishop 14:16

I wish you had these renderings now we could put them before the camera. What do you see? Sound 13.


R


Ruldoph Novotky 14:30


Newark, t's our home. That's the way the business community looks at the city in which it works and the city in which it makes it successes and its failures. When you consider in your home that we sometimes define as where we live and where we raise our families. You are


often very lucky to spend four of your waking hours. The more important part is the city in which you make your living the city in which you make your success and you're there twice your waking hours as you are at your other home. We look upon it as our home and just as our home town we want to see it good, we want to see it healthy, we want to see it thriving. And and if Newark is our home we're going to make it the best home town that anybody ever had.


 **Gordon Bishop** 15:48  
[Background]

 **Ruldoph Novotky** 15:48  
Can you please arrange arrange to start again would you please arrange to put the emphasis on that account and also if you would like to take this money water and have it validated before you give it back to her place to take care of that. Thank you very much. Thank you would you call me if you have any further trouble Yes. Thank you so much. Thank you Richard


 16:23  
this will be about a minute of ambience

 **Ruldoph Novotky** 16:26  
with a shot in the bank

 16:35  
I'm gonna do it

 **Ruldoph Novotky** 16:39  
right on the line.

 16:42  
Sounds good. Okay. Okay,

 **Ruldoph Novotky** 16:47  
Now I'm going to have the teller just let me have this I'm going to have the teller to post in the interest of this account for you. I think that it clear that matter up in the meantime he's going to give you another certificate and if you have any problems would you please get back to me.

Thank you so much. Nice to have you here. Thank you Well hello there how are you? Pleased to see you



17:41

right



Gordon Bishop 17:50

16



Ruldoph Novotky 18:02

Why hello Gordon Bishop how are you? Pleased to see you, have a seat. Well, I guess you're here to talk with me today about



18:13

Yeah, that is a cut.